



**A CHILD'S TEETH and gums are important. Teeth are needed for chewing, talking and smiling.**

**BABY TEETH NEED to stay healthy even though they will be lost. They hold space for straight and healthy permanent teeth.**

**MAKE SURE your own teeth and mouth are healthy. The germs in your mouth that cause cavities and tooth decay can spread to your child!**

- Never share your spoon and fork.
- Don't chew a baby's food or taste the food before feeding the baby.
- Clean a baby's pacifier with water, not by licking it.
- Take care of your own teeth and visit the dentist yourself.



## HEALTHY TEETH TIPS

### HEALTHY TEETH FOR HAPPY SMILES

**Keeping a child's teeth and gums healthy**

#### FROM birth to 1 year old:

Most babies get their first teeth at around 6 months.

But it's a good idea to protect a baby from the start:

- Breastfeed your baby.
- Put a baby down to sleep without a bottle.
- Begin giving a baby a cup around 6 months of age.
- Wipe or brush the baby's gums and teeth every day, especially after eating.
- Use clean washcloth or a moist, soft, child's toothbrush.
- Do not use toothpaste.

#### STARTING AT AGE 1, take the baby to the dentist at least once a year.

- Don't let a baby use a bottle after 12 months.
- Check a baby's teeth and gums for early tooth decay every day.
  - Look for white, brown or black spots on the baby's teeth. If you see any spots, take him or her to the dentist right away.
  - Check the gums for swelling, bleeding and pimples.

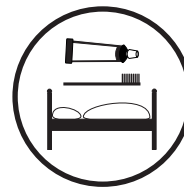
#### FROM 1 to 2 years old:

- Stop bottle-feeding and continue checking teeth and gums daily.
- Put water in a training cup if he or she is carrying it around.
- Provide healthy snacks between meals, not sweet ones.
- Wash gums and teeth with a washcloth or soft toothbrush without toothpaste.
- Check every week for early signs of tooth decay.



#### FROM 2 to 3 years old:

- Brush a child's teeth twice a day, especially before bedtime.
- Ask a doctor or dentist about fluoride toothpaste when the child is about 2-years-old.
- Use a pea-sized amount of fluoride toothpaste.
- Teach a child to spit out the toothpaste after brushing.
- Don't let a child swallow or eat toothpaste.
- Start teaching a child to brush his or her teeth but remember you still need to help.
- Take a child to the dentist at least once a year.



#### PROTECT A

**CHILD'S teeth as he or she grows older. When a child is 3 to 5 years old:**

- Help the child brush at least twice a day.
- Floss his or her teeth every day.
- Take the child to the dentist at least once a year.



*Wonder where to find a dentist?*

Call the California Dental Association:  
(800) 232-7645 or (800) CDA-SMILE

Call the California Society of Pediatric Dentists:  
(800) 503-9780

Call the Denti-Cal Hotline:  
(800) 322-6384